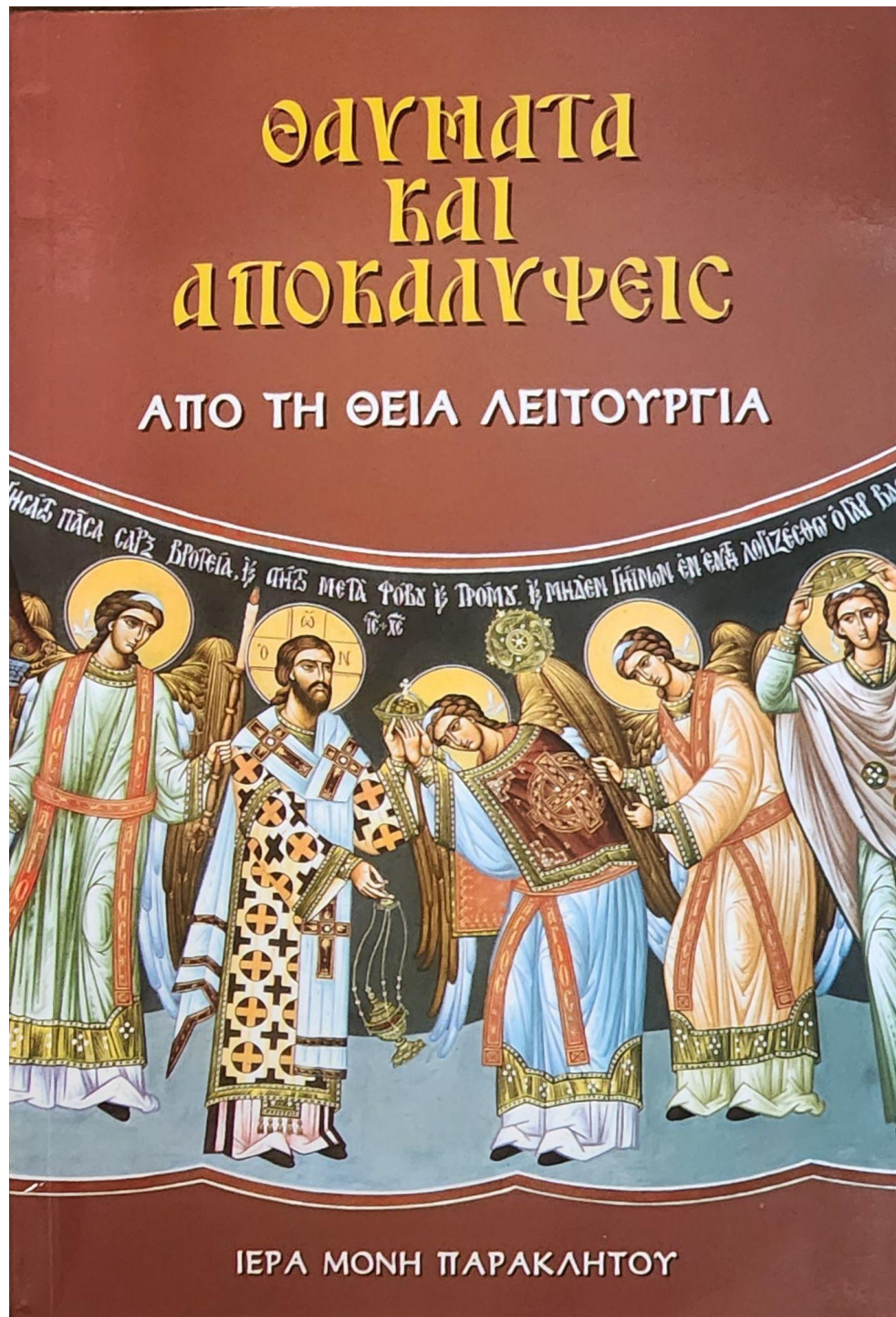


The Power of the Mystery

Chapter 1 of *Miracles and Revelations from the Divine Liturgy* by the Holy Monastery of the Paraclete, Oropos Attica, 1997.



The Bread Turned to Stone

In the time of St. John Chrysostom (4th century) lived a rich man who belonged with his wife to the sect of Macedonius. Once hearing the saint's doctrine, he repented and returned to the truth of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church. His wife, however, while professing her faith in the Orthodox doctrine with her mouth, followed heresy with her heart.

On a great feast of the Church, where many Christians used to partake of communion, the following incident happened:

The rich man's wife secretly went to the priests of the heretics to receive communion. She did not receive communion, but after taking the bread in her hands, she secretly gave it to her servant to keep it without anyone else noticing what she was doing.¹

Later, when the Orthodox liturgy was held, the woman openly went with her husband to church to receive communion. As her turn came, she took the holy bread from the hand of St. Chrysostom but did not put it in her mouth; she secretly partook of the bread of heretics.

But she was immediately shocked by a miracle: The bread of the heretics turned into stone in her mouth.

The woman was scared. With a loud voice, she told everyone about the incident and believed wholeheartedly in the Orthodox Church.

St. John placed that stone in the sacristy to commemorate the miracle.

The Anaphora Prayer

In parts of Apamea, in the second province of the Syrians, there was a village called Gonagon.

Once, a mile from the village, some children grazed their livestock. While playing, they agreed to celebrate the divine liturgy, as they saw the priest in the temple. So they nominated a “priest” and two other “deacons”. Then they approached a smooth rock, where, as if on an altar, they placed bread and a clay pot of wine.

The “priest” stood in the middle, and the “deacons” stood on his right and left. So he began to say the prayer of anaphora,² while the “deacons” made air with their beans instead of fans (ριπίδιον).³ The little “priest” knew the prayer of the anaphora because he used to stand - like all the children - in front of the holy steps at the holy gatherings. Thus, he listened and learned the prayers.

After everything was done according to the ecclesiastical order and while they were preparing to cut the loaves, something terrible happened: Fire fell from the sky and turned to ashes everything that had been offered and the rock itself. Not the slightest trace remained!

The children fell from their terror and lay there half-dead, unable to utter a word. Parents were concerned about their delay. Searching, they found them in this condition and took them to the village. They persistently asked what caused their ecstasy but received no answer.

When the children came to their senses, they told what they had done and suffered. Soon the bishop was informed of the miraculous event, who went with all the clergy to the place of the miracle and saw the signs of the heavenly fire. Then he put the children in a monastery, while in the place of the fire he built a church and around it a beautiful monastery.

The Necessity of Holy Communion

A certain Egyptian prodigal man fell in love with a married and wise woman. But he could not tempt her otherwise, so he resorted to a magician. After paying him, he asked him to make her husband drive her out with his art.

The magician tried, but because he could not turn the woman's mind, he made her look like a mare with his sorcery. Her husband began to cry and moan. The mare did not speak or eat anything for three days. Finally, he put a halter on her and led her to Saint Makarios.

“Why did you bring us this mare?” asked the disturbed monks, who were near the hermit's cell.

“To be merciful with the prayer of Abba Makarios,” he answered.

“What harm did she do?”

“The one you see,” he explained, “was my wife, but I don't know how she turned into a mare. has been fasting for three days.”

The monks approached the saint and said to him: “Some man brought a horse here.”

“You are horses,” he replied, “because you have the eyes of horses. However, she is a woman, as she was created.”

The Abba blessed water, poured it on the mare's head and prayed for her. So he made her seem to everyone a woman again. And after giving her something to eat, he let her go with her husband.

However, as she was leaving, he advised her never to miss the church or stay away from Holy Communion. “This,” he emphasised to her, “you suffered because you had five weeks since receiving the Holy Mysteries.”

Saint Typhon and the Grapes

Saint Tychon, bishop of Amathus (4th-5th centuries), is one of the most famous saints of Cyprus. He took the name of the ‘Wonderworker’ for the many miracles he performed both during his lifetime and after his repose. One of them, impressive and paradoxical, is this:

Once upon a time, some workers were planting vines in a field. At work, one threw away some dry vines as though they were useless. The saint took such a vine, and after praying to God, begging Him to give it life and germination and fruit, he planted it in the name of the Holy Trinity. And, O, the wonder! That dry vine immediately took root, put forth leaves, blossomed and produced grapes that were ripe and sweet even months before the grape season!

Since then, every year, the miracle repeats itself. On June 16, the day of the saint's memory, the vine presents early grapes, ripe and sweet, offered as a blessing to the faithful. Indeed, for many years after his death, this was unbelievable: The grapes were green and sour until the moment when the divine liturgy of the feast began. Then the grapes began to turn black and sweeten. When the liturgy ended, the grapes also became black and sweet. Those who tasted them felt a strange physical well-being and an immense peace of mind.

The same happens to this day to all those who honour and celebrate the memory of the saint.

The Miracle of Orthodoxy

Thirty miles away from the Aegean, in the city of Cilicia, two Stylites practised hesychasm. One was orthodox, while the other belonged to the heresy of Severus. They practised at a distance of six miles from each other.

The heretic accused the Orthodox Church and tried various arguments to lure the Orthodox into his heresy. He then, wanting to inform him about who the true believer is, asked him to send him a portion of his own Communion.

The heretic, thinking the Orthodox would accept his error, gladly sent the portion. Then the Orthodox put a boiling cauldron and threw in the portion of the heretic. Immediately it dissolved in the hot water of the cauldron.

Then, he took a portion from the Holy Communion of the Orthodox Church and threw it into the same cauldron he was stirring. At that exact moment, the cauldron cooled down, while the holy portion not only did not dissolve but did not even get wet!

The Victory of Christ

A magician performed false miracles with the devil's help to deceive Christians and get them on his side.

Among his other miracles, he did this: He entered the fire for a long time. Then he asked for the help of the demon, who extinguished the fire, so the magician remained unharmed.

When the local bishop was informed of the incident, he took the holy tabernacle with the despotic Body and approached the fire. He immediately suggested to the magician that he be chained and fall into the fire so that he, too, could see his miraculous rescue.

The magician agreed to be tied up and thrown into the fire, thinking that this time, like so many others, the miracle would happen. But as soon as he was engulfed in flames, he began to burn and scream:

“Help me, demons, because the fire will consume me.”

They all then heard a terrible voice:

“I have helped you many times. But now I can't because one stronger than me stands beside you.”

So the magician turned to ashes.

40-day Liturgy “for Health”

A certain ruler from Nicomedia fell seriously ill and, seeing that he was nearing death, called his wife to express his last wishes to her:

“Distribute my wealth to the poor and orphans. Free the slaves. But I don't want you to give money to the churches for liturgies.”

In his great tribulation, the dying man faithfully invoked the blessing of Abba Isaiah, a holy monk who lived ascetically near Nicomedia, and immediately -- O, the miracle -- he became well.

So he got up and ran to the saint. He welcomed him, praising God for the wondrous miracle.

“Do you remember, my child,” he asked him, “what time you recovered from the illness?”

“When I invoked your blessing,” he replied.

The venerable one, with his enlightened mind, knew what had been said during his illness and asked again, “Have you, my child, leave money to the priests to perform liturgies for your soul’s salvation?”

“No, Geronda. What would I benefit from leaving them something? Wouldn't it go to waste?”

“Don't say that. The Brother of God James writes: “Is anyone among you suffering ill? Let him call for the presbyters of the Church, and let them pray over him, having anointed him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the one who is sick, and the Lord shall raise him; and if he be one who hath committed sins, it shall be forgiven him.” So the prayers of the priests are effective for the one who asks them faithfully. Give now also a sum for liturgies, and you will receive from God the necessary information.”

So he did. He gave money to a priest to do forty liturgies for him and returned home.

After forty days, when the liturgies were completed, as he awoke from sleep, he suddenly saw the doors of his house open and forty men on horseback, brilliant and angel-like; twenty on the right and twenty on the left.

“My lords, cried the ruler in astonishment, how did you enter the house of a sinful man?”

“We forty, whom you see,” they replied, “represent the liturgies performed for you to the benevolent God. He sent us to accompany you to church. Go in joyfully, without hesitation. Behold, the forty liturgies were completed with the priest’s hands so Christ might unite with you and dwell in your heart.”

After this, the ruler divided his property among pious priests to hold liturgies for the remission of his sins, declaring that divine liturgies and good deeds can raise man's soul from the infernal to the heavenly.

The Help of the Helpless

The extent to which the Divine Liturgy can help the Christians mentioned in it is shown by the following incidents, narrated by Saint Gregory the Dialogist, Pope of Rome (590-604).

There once lived a captive far from his people and bound with heavy chains. His wife used to have the divine liturgy regularly celebrated for his sake.

After years, the captive returned to his homeland. He then mentioned to his wife that some days his chains were loosened invisibly and paradoxically, and thus he was a little relieved.

Astonished, she found that this was happening on the very days when the Divine Liturgy was being held for his salvation.

A sailor was travelling to Rome with the bishop of Panormos Agathon. During the voyage, the sailor was in a rowboat, which was tied with a rope to the back of the ship. At some point, a mighty wave cut the rope, and the rowboat disappeared.

The ship ran aground on an island, Ustica. There the bishop waited three days for the rowboat with the sailor to appear. Finally, he concluded that the sailor had drowned. He, therefore, ordered a divine liturgy to give rest to his soul.

When the bishop arrived in Italy, there, in the city of Porto, he unexpectedly met the sailor. His joy was indescribable.

“How did you escape the wreck?” he asked with affectionate curiosity.

“For a long time, holy despot, I struggled with the wild waves. The boat was filled with water and capsized several times. From trying to hold onto her back, I eventually became exhausted and, at some point, fainted. Then, while I was neither awake nor asleep, someone appeared before me in the sea, offering me bread. I ate and got stronger. Soon a ship passed by, picked me up and took me safely to a shore.

“Do you remember what day that stranger appeared, offering you bread?” asked the bishop.

The sailor's answer filled him with surprise. It was the day when the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in Ustica for him.

The Prisoner's Relief

A similar incident to the previous ones was once narrated by St. John the Merciful (610-619), patriarch of Alexandria, to his clergy to show them how the liturgies are very beneficial:

A young man from Cyprus, a compatriot of the saint, was taken prisoner to Persia and locked up in a prison called Oblivion. There was a strict Persian law that those imprisoned there should never come out alive.

At one point, however, some managed to escape. They wrongly informed the young man's relatives that he had died in prison. After that, his parents brought Prosphora to church three times a year to repose his soul, believing him dead.

Four years passed. One day the young man managed to escape and return to his homeland. The surprise and joy of his parents were indescribable because they did not welcome him as an escapee from prison but as a resurrected man.

Later they told him that, for the repose of his soul, they especially remembered his name in the liturgies of Theophany, Pascha and Pentecost. Then the young man assured them with emotion that in those days, some light-bearer would appear, who would free him from the chains for a while.

Miraculous Signs

Saint Theodore of Sykeotis came from the village of Sykies in Anastasioupolis, the largest province of Ankara. He was the illegitimate son of a prostitute, but this did not prevent God from making him His vessel of choice and an honourable high priest. Finally, the peaceful Theodore left the diocese and indulged undistracted in his beloved asceticism and hesychia.

Once a convict, George, passed by his cell with his guards to get his blessing. The soldiers begged the saint to counsel George.

“Release him, my children, from the bonds so that I may give him communion,” the venerable one pleaded with the guards.

“We don't dare, Geronda, because he is strong. And if he wants to do something crazy, we won't be able to stop him,” they justified themselves.

Then the God-bearing Theodore took the holy cup in his hands, raised his eyes and sighed. At that exact moment, the chains were loosened, and they fell with a noise.

The soldiers were frightened and ran to secure the doors.

“Do not be afraid of him,” the saint reassured them. “I know his prudence. He will not do anything reckless.”

So he gave communion to the condemned man and then made everyone eat. After eating, his guards again tied the chains, and they continued on their way.

Victory Against the Demons

The desert is not only a refuge for peaceful monks. It is also a place of exile for demons, who set the most terrible traps for the strugglers of Christ.

The location of Melana was where Saint Athanasios the Athonite, practised asceticism in Melana. The devil fought methodically to displace him from there, but he failed. Thus, the saint was preparing to construct the monastic complex of the Great Lavra.

However, when the construction began, what the builders built during the day, the demons were demolished at night.

Our Lady then appeared to St. Athanasius and told him: “For the work to proceed, you must build a temple in one day and celebrate a divine liturgy on the same day.”

Indeed, within a day, a church dedicated to the Holy Mercenaries Kosmas and Damianos was built, and the liturgy was performed. It was so small that the priest could barely fit in the sanctuary and four or five people in the rest of the space.

So, by the grace of the divine liturgy, the demons left, and the construction of the Lavra proceeded.

The Turk's Punishment

A new venerable figure from Farasa, Cappadocia, known in his homeland as Hatzefendis, is Saint Arsenios of Cappadocia.

The Farasians recount many miraculous events related to the saint.

Once in Farasa, on the day of the Resurrection, a Turkish robber entered the church while the saint celebrated the divine liturgy. When he saw the Turk armed and shameless inside the temple,

he warned him to leave immediately. But he didn't pay attention. The saint continued the divine liturgy unperturbed.

When he went out for the great entrance, the Turk saw him not stepping on the ground but walking in the air. Seeing this miracle, he began to tremble. He tried to leave, but he couldn't because he felt tied by an invisible rope.

The saint, after entering the sanctuary with the Holy Gifts, signalled to the Turk to leave.

Indeed, at that moment, the robber felt the binds loosen. Trembling, he went out and fell down like a dead man.

When the liturgy was over, the priest came out of the church, approached the Turk, and picked him up so that he could rest on his feet.

Then he reproached the Turk sternly, gave him five piastres, and let him go away healthy but terrified.

The Value of the Proskomide

Divine grace, which springs from bloodless sacrifice, is offered not only to the living but also to the dead. That is why the liturgies do not cease to pray “for health” but also “for the rest of the souls of God's departed servants”.

The greater the faithfulness and love of the priests, the greater the list of names mentioned in the Proskomide.⁴

The spiritual Father Savvas (1821-1908), a venerable Athonite figure, seemed an inconspicuous monk with his tiny body. But when he celebrated the liturgy, he looked majestic, and his face shone like an angel's.

In the Proskomide, he mentioned *numberless* names. He used a huge tray, and for two or three hours, he made portions and incessantly read names.

“Holy father, you get exhausted commemorating so many names,” some fathers used to say to him out of love.

“I don't get tired,” he answered. “On the contrary, I feel great joy. Those mentioned benefit a lot. Their benefit is my joy.”

As a young priest, Father Savvas received a revelation by which God revealed to him the great benefit that souls derive from commemoration. Shortly before his death, he recorded it in response to those who asked him why he mentioned so many names every day.

“In 1843,” he wrote, “I was given numerous names for forty liturgies. On the day I was going to celebrate the last liturgy, waiting for my Geronda to take Kairos,⁵ I fell asleep leaning on the lectern and had the following revelatory dream:

“I was wearing the priestly stole and standing before the altar, on which stood the holy paten of the liturgy, filled with the Blood of Christ. Then I saw an angel of the Lord in the form of a priest take the paper with the names from the `Proskomide and approach the altar. There, after placing the paper near the holy paten, he dipped the tongs into the Blood of Christ and erased a name. He dipped and erased until all the names were finished and the paper was blank.

“After the Divine Liturgy, I reported the dream to my Geronda, who told me: ‘You are not worthy of forgiveness of the sins of those you have commemorated. By faith, they received the remission of their sins.’ This dream is why I remember everyone's names.”

Forty Liturgies “for Repose”

Geronda Daniel the Athonite (†1929), the wise Hesychast of Katounakia, has recorded in his manuscripts the following incident, which occurred in 1869 in his homeland, Smyrna.

A righteous Christian called his spiritual father Papa Dimitris in the last days of his life and said to him: “Today I will die. Please tell me, what should I do at this critical time?”

The priest, knowing his virtue and his sacramental preparation, suggested to him the following: “Instruct them to make you a regular forty-day liturgy after your death.”

So it happened. Demetrios -- that was his name -- commanded his son to make a forty-day liturgy after his repose. George, too, in obedience to the last wish of his good father, entrusted their execution without delay to Papa Dimitris.

The modest Levite agreed to perform the forty liturgies, which he had proposed to the blessed one and retired for this entire period to the chapel of the Holy Apostles

Thirty-nine liturgies were performed without a hitch. The last one was supposed to be a Sunday. But on Saturday night, the priest got a severe toothache that forced him to return home.

The elder suggested removing the tooth, but he refused because he had to perform the last liturgy the next day. At midnight the pain peaked, and finally, the priest was forced to remove the tooth. But because he was bleeding, he postponed the last liturgy until Monday.

Meanwhile, on Saturday afternoon, George, the son of the blessed Demetrios, prepared some money for the priest to give him the next day.

At midnight he woke up to pray. He sat down in bed and began to recall his father's virtues, gifts, and wise words. At some point, the following thought crossed his mind: "Do the forty liturgies benefit the souls of the departed, or did the church establish them for the consolation of the living?"

Just then, a light sleep took him, and he saw that he was in a plain of indescribable beauty. He felt himself unworthy to be in such a holy and heavenly place. In front of him was a vast verdant orchard with an inexpressible fragrance.

"This is definitely paradise," he mused. Oh, what bliss awaits those who live virtuously on earth.

In awe, gazing at the otherworldly beauty, he saw a splendid palace of exquisite architectural grace, its walls glittering with diamonds and gold. Its beauty was indescribable. He drew nearer, and then -- what joy! -- he saw at the palace door his father, radiant and resplendent.

"How did you get here, my child?" he asked meekly and lovingly.

"I have no idea, Father. I understand that I am not worthy of this place. But tell me, how are you doing here? How heroes? Whose palace is this?"

"The philanthropy of Christ the Savior with the intercessions of Panagia, for whom I had special reverence, made me worthy to be ranked in this place. I really wanted to enter the palace today. However, the builder, who is building it, went through a hardship -- he pulled out his tooth tonight -- and so the forty days of his construction did not end. That's why I'll be in tomorrow."

After that, George woke up in tears and surprised, but also with questions. He spent the rest of the night singing praises and glorifications to God. In the morning, after the divine liturgy, he took a prosphora, wine and a pure candle and set off for the chapel of the Holy Apostles. Papa Dimitris welcomed him with joy:

"Now, I have just finished the Divine Liturgy. Thus, the forty-day liturgy is completed."

The visitor then told him about his night vision. When he reached the point where his father did not enter the palace because the builder pulled out his tooth, Papa Dimitris felt horror and admiration.

“I am, my dear, the builder who worked on building the palace,” he said with joy. “I didn't officiate today because I had my tooth pulled. However, I will do a liturgy on Monday, and thus I will complete your father's spiritual palace.”

The Irresistible Power

The late Metropolitan of Argolida Chrysostomos Deligiannopoulos (†1985) served as a military chaplain in Albania during the Greco-Italian War of the '40s. The following testimonies are from his personal diary and his personal narratives. They prove that Holy Communion was a significant force that shielded the Greek fighters at the front.

...March 9, 1941. The Sunday of Orthodoxy and commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs. Mussolini himself was present on the Albanian front and personally directed the famous Spring Offensive.

I feel spiritual jubilation combined with intense nervousness. That is, while in the morning we were preparing to celebrate the Divine Liturgy in the house where we were staying, suddenly a barrage of fire began from mortars of the enemy artillery.

“My Papoulis,” the deacon tells me, “how should we do today's liturgy?”

“Today, it is imperative that we perform the liturgy,” I replied, “to come under God's protection.”

The deacon finally relented, so we enjoyed the divine mystagogy with a beautiful choir from the soldiers while the surrounding area had turned into an inferno of fire.

In this liturgy, we experienced the miraculous presence of Christ: Twice during it, artillery shells grazed the edge of the wall of our house, fell into the opposite area and sank into the ground without exploding. If they burst, we would all be killed inside the house ... On this day, the sub-commander, the sub-guard and many soldiers of the regiment had communion.

However, finishing the divine liturgy, a sad event came to teach us a good lesson. Some soldiers, instead of coming to the liturgy, preferred to take shelter in an underground trench. And while the place was riddled with shells, one fell into the trench, killing four men and wounding three others. One soldier was found decapitated...

On Sunday, March 30, 41, I set off very early for the first battalion, where I officiated and preached. About five hundred men received communion. My hand was gripped and ached terribly by the constant transmission of Holy Communion.

Sometimes I had to work on my knees in a tent because it was always raining outside. The soldiers attended the Divine Liturgy in the rain, and at the end, they communed the Holy Mysteries. What a touching sight. In the wild mountains and the rain, the soldiers unite with Christ the Savior.

The Divine Liturgy and the Figs

When Fr. Benediktos Petrakis (†1961) was a preacher in Ioannina, he went one Sunday morning to celebrate liturgy and preach in a church in the city.

Outside the church, he saw a man selling figs with his cart.

“Cover it, blessed one,” he says, “and come into the church for liturgy. After the liturgy, you will sell it all.”

“My grandpa,” he replied with an air of insolence, “you mind your own business, and I’ll mind mine.”

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“Fine... Then you should know that, by the time the liturgy is over, everything will be rotten with worms, the old man tells him prophetically.

“Well... Then know that, by the time the liturgy is over, everything will worm,” the Geronda told him prophetically.

And indeed, everything got worms, and he threw it away.

After the liturgy, when Fr. Benedict was leaving the church, he ran repentantly and asked for forgiveness.

The Drunk Priest

The bishop who told this story is still alive. It is a true story and has deep meaning because it refers to the prayer of the living for the dead. These prayers are always heard, but more so at the time of divine liturgy.

The bishop mentioned above had in his area a priest, Papa John, who was devout and beloved by all. In fact, in the holy prothesis, he was a little late because he read many names.

But he had one terrible fault: he liked wine. As good as he was at his duties, so weak he was at drinking. Many told him to cut off this passion, so unbefitting of a minister of God. He understood it himself, cried with a complaint, and made a few attempts, but in a few days, he started doing the same thing again.

One day, when he had again succumbed to his passion, he went to church and, as he was half dazed, he said the “Blessed” and began the Divine Liturgy. However, God relented, and at some point, he stumbled inside the sanctuary, and the precious Gifts fell from his hands.

He froze in fear. He fell weeping and began to gather the Body and Blood of Christ with his tongue. He felt guilty choking him because he was dizzy from the wine when he dropped the Gifts.

He went to the bishop and confessed his horrible sin. And the next day, after much deliberation, he sat at his desk and took the pen in his hand. He should have initiated the procedure for the deposition of Papa Giannis, but...

Where the bishop's hand stood hesitantly, he suddenly saw thousands of people coming out of the room's wall as if in a vision. They had sore eyes and walked past him shouting:

“No, Despot, do not punish the priest, do not depose, forgive him!”

Countless armies of people pass, men, women, children, well-dressed or poorly dressed, a true rally of souls. And they all gestured towards him, shouted and pleaded towards him, cried and pleaded persistently:

“No, Your Eminence, do not do this, do not persecute our priest! He remembers us and helps us in every service, he truly feels sorry for us; he is our friend! Don't depose him! No! No! No!...”

This vision lasted a long time. The bishop, amazed, watched this sea of people shouting and begging for the drunken priest. He understood that it was the souls of the dead that Papa John was commemorating when he officiated. And this commemoration relieved them a lot, like water in the summer heat. Here is tangible proof, he thought, that our prayers comfort the souls of the dead. Then he sent and called the priest.

“Tell me, Papa John, do you mention many names in the holy Prothesis when you celebrate liturgy?”

“Hundreds, Your Eminence. I haven't counted them.”

“Why are you doing this and delaying the liturgy?” the bishop scolded him.

“I feel very sorry for the dead because they have no help from anywhere else except from the prayers of the Church. Therefore, I ask the Most High to give them rest. I have a book, and I write down all the names they give me for remembrance. I received this lesson from my father, who was also a priest.”

“You are doing well, agreed the bishop, souls are in need. Keep up the good work. Just be careful not to get drunk again. From today you will never put wine in your mouth again. That's the rule I give you. You are forgiven.”

Indeed, Papa John was finally freed from the passion of drinking. Only he stands in the Proskomide longer now, remembering the names of the dead.

NOTES

1. Christians partook of the Holy Gifts in the early centuries separately. First, they received the holy bread in their right palm, and then they received communion the consecrated wine from the holy chalice. To this day, this act remains for the clergy who receive communion inside the holy altar. For the rest of the faithful, the simultaneous sacrament of the Holy Gifts with the holy tongs was applied [probably after the 8th century].
2. The prayer of anaphora is spoken dialogically between the priest and the people in the most central part of the divine liturgy, called the holy anaphora and begins after the recitation of the Creed. This prayer includes the apostolic blessing, the eucharist, the eucharistic hymn, the remembrance of the redeeming work of the Lord, the utterance of the words of the constitution of the mystery of the Holy Eucharist, the invocation of the Holy Spirit for the sanctification of the holy Gifts, the commemoration (diptych), the final blessing.
3. The *ripidia* were unique fans made of leather or feathers, which the deacons held during the Divine Liturgy and moved over the Holy Gifts so that no insect would fall into the holy chalice.
4. Proskomide is the service in the prothesis (the area in the sanctuary to the left of the holy table) before the divine liturgy. During this service, the priest prepares the bread and wine that the faithful offer to celebrate the Eucharist. These gifts will later be carried (at the Great Entrance) to the altar for sanctification and transformation into the Body and Blood of Christ.

5. Kairos is a short service which takes place, before the divine liturgy, in front of the beautiful gate by the priests and deacons who are going to officiate. It is preceded by a prostration to the provost or bishop's throne and, after dismissal, a deep prostration to the people. If a bishop is to officiate, then, instead of this service, the priests and deacons take only the bishop's blessing and enter the holy altar. The bishop then does Kairos alone.
- 6.